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IV. UNFPA/UNDP: REPORTS TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

A. Follow-up to General Assembly resolutions 44/211 and 47/199

1. In his introduction, the Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support of UNDP outlined a number of policy, programme and administrative measures taken by the organization during the past year to implement General Assembly resolutions 44/211 and 47/199. Action had been taken at two levels: first, individually by UNDP on provisions of the resolutions that had a direct bearing on the work of the organization, such as the programme approach, national execution, decentralization and delegation of authority, common training, and the country strategy note (CSN); and secondly, in conjunction with partner organizations through the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) and the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) on aspects of the resolution that had implications for the United Nations development system as a whole, such as the resident coordinator system, harmonization of programming cycles and common premises and services.

2. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) of UNFPA, in his introduction, noted the close linkage between the Fund's Programme Review and Strategy Development (PRSD) exercise and the programme approach. He said the PRSD exercise included a comprehensive analysis of the country's population situation and ensured that all those active in the population field in a particular country were consulted during the strategy-development process. The UNFPA technical support services/country support team system was instrumental in the process, providing the necessary technical and analytical guidance at the country level. He noted that the Fund made increasing use of national execution, as well as of national expertise whenever available. Inadequate national capacity and financial reporting were among the problems the Fund had

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encountered in national execution. The Fund continued efforts to decentralize project approval authority to the field and had extended total programme approval authority, on a trial basis, to 12 countries.

3. Several delegations noted the substantial progress made by both organizations in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199. The common format of the reports was welcomed.

4. The interest shown and work accomplished on the CSN was particularly encouraging. One delegation asked if a common format could be developed for the CSNs. Some speakers, while supporting the principle of the CSN and citing its usefulness as a tool for strengthening the resident coordinator system, sought assurances that its preparation would remain a national choice, as intended by the General Assembly. One delegation questioned its value to countries with low indicative planning figures. Another asked for a progress report on the formulation of the CSN at the country level, as a means of examining the usefulness of the process. UNFPA was asked if the CSN had helped it to integrate population strategies at the country level.

5. Delegations sought specific information on the role of the United Nations Office for Project Services in national execution. With reference to UNFPA, several delegations sought clarification on the role of specialized agencies in national execution following the International Conference on Population and Development.

6. Further information was also sought about the use of the Resident Coordinator system and experience with the programme approach, especially with regard to the under-delivery associated with the mechanism in one country.

7. The efforts of both organizations in decentralization were supported, with some speakers asking for assurances on accountability.

8. The agreement reached by JCGP on widening the pool for resident coordinator appointments was appreciated. It was hoped that contributing organizations would put their best candidates forward. A question was raised as to how organizations contributing to the pool ensured a smooth transition for returning staff.

9. Other comments related to the prospects for strengthening databases within UNDP for new recipient countries, encouragement of a more strategic role for the Executive Board in the country programming process, noting the action taken by the UNICEF Executive Board in that regard, and a request for a compilation and examination of local costs, including local services.

10. Several delegations noted the lack of reference to monitoring and evaluation in the UNDP document. Moreover, more substantive reporting was asked for the future, particularly with regard to problems faced in implementation of the resolutions, especially at the country level. In order for the Economic and Social Council to provide guidance to UNDP and UNFPA, it was also suggested that in the future, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF consider drawing up one common report, perhaps through the JCGP.

11. In response to the points raised, the Assistant Administrator informed the Executive Board that over 40 per cent of resident representatives had experience with other United Nations organizations during their career. He regretted that no special reference was being made to evaluation and monitoring but noted that some progress had been made in terms of harmonization of evaluation and monitoring among United Nations organizations. A detailed account on progress within those fields was included in the report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council. He also informed the Board about the efforts presently being undertaken within UNDP to develop an efficient information management system, one obvious precondition for a successful decentralization process within the organization.

12. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

95/17. UNFPA/UNDP: Reports to the Economic and Social Council: Follow-up to General Assembly resolution 47/199

The Executive Board

1. Transmits the reports from the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund to the Economic and Social Council together with the comments of the Executive Board;

2. Requests the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund to ensure that future reports on the implementation of the triennial policy review address more thoroughly problems and opportunities that have been identified, particularly at the field level, and contain any appropriate recommendations and requests for guidance from the Executive Board;

3. Further requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, together with the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, to consider producing a common report on the implementation of the triennial policy review for both the UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF Executive Boards, which should contain both a common section and sections by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund, respectively.

8 June 1995